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COUNTY
HISTORY
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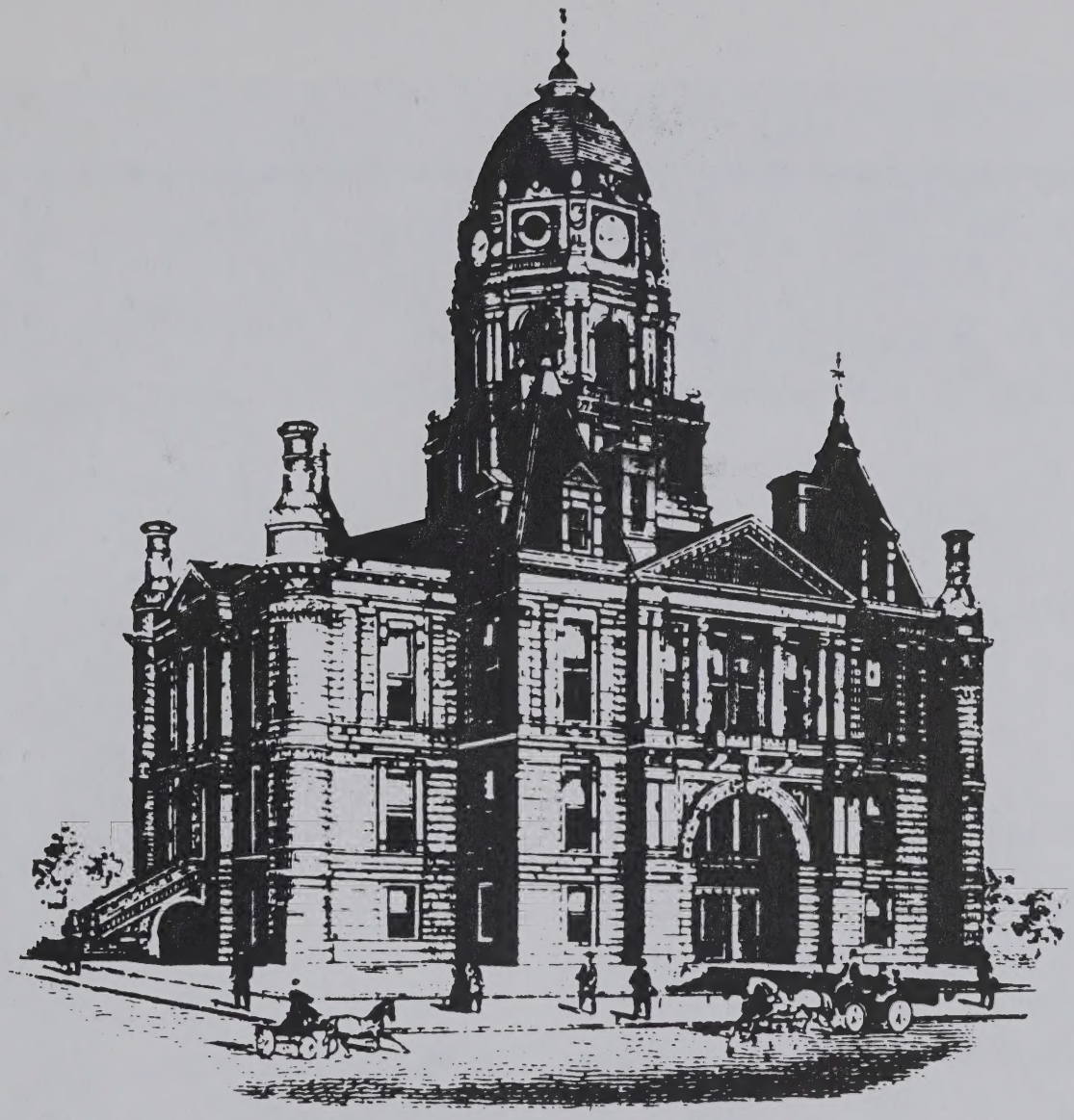
A VISUAL HISTORY OF WHITLEY COUNTY, INDIANA



Whitley County Courthouse
Circa 1895

This Visual History of Whitley County, Indiana, is printed for the use of all fourth grade students of the County and it is hoped it will serve as a history teaching tool for these young people. Funds for this booklet were provided by the Mary E. Hallowell Trust of Alpha Iota Chapter of Kappa Kappa Kappa, Inc.

Expressions of gratitude to:

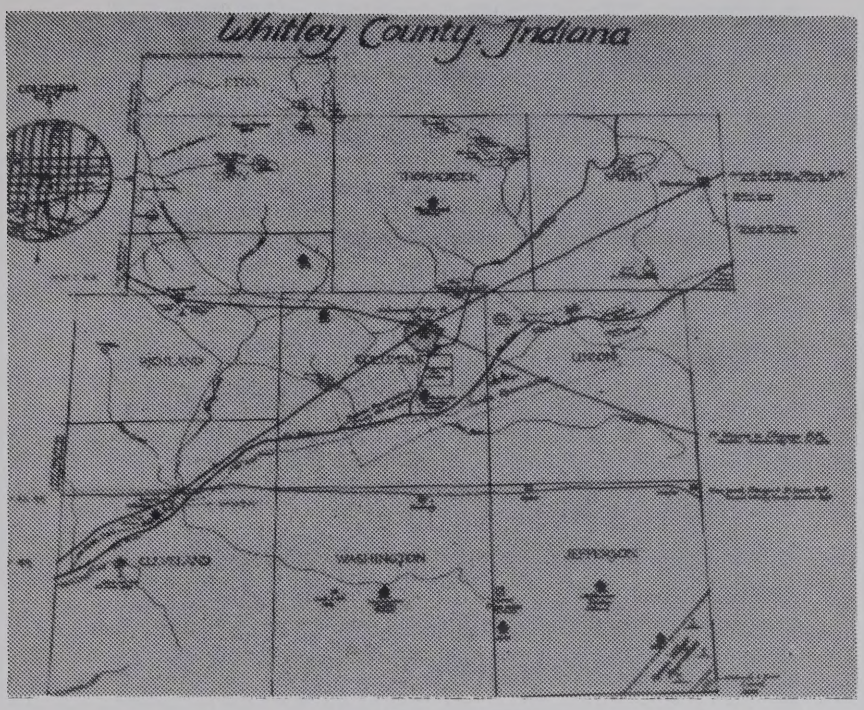
Bernice Carver, Whitley County Historian, for writing the historical narrative accompanying each painting

Connie Grant (Mrs. James) for typing the historical narrative

Marilyn Kimble (Mrs. Max) for providing the negatives of the paintings

Photography by Gregg Copp of entire group of historic paintings by Whitley County Art Guild artists.

The original composite of paintings currently hangs in the lobby of the Whitley County Courthouse, Columbia City, Indiana.



MAP OF WHITLEY COUNTY, INDIANA

Cartographer: Mrs. Lynn Fesler

Whitley County was originally occupied and claimed by the Miami and Pottawatomi Indian tribes. After the United States government had secured the title to the land by treaties with the Indians, the land was surveyed into townships of six miles square and subdivided into sections of one mile square.

Whitley County was surveyed in the years 1828 to 1840. The surveyors were instructed to make notes on the character of the land, the location of rivers, lakes, swamps and Indian trails. Items of interest on the original plats of Whitley County were a sugar camp in section four and a strip of prairie in sections seven and eight in Troy Township; a white oak, eight feet in diameter, in Cleveland Township; a cranberry marsh in section twenty of Columbia Township; and a salt lick on the section line between sections seventeen and twenty in Washington Township.

Whitley County was officially opened for settlement when the books for entry were opened at Fort Wayne, Indiana. All the land in the county was entered or sold at this office except the land reserved for school purposes, canal land and that ceded by the national government to the state as swamp land. The school land or section sixteen in each township was sold by the county school commissioners. The canal lots were sold through land offices in Peru and Logansport. Swamp land was disposed of by the auditor and treasurer of each county. The patents for these lands were issued by the governor of the state. The majority of the cash entries in Whitley County was made in the years 1835, '36, '37.

Whitley County, known as Murray Township, was a part of Allen County from the organization of that county in 1824 to 1834, when it was attached to Huntington County for civil and judicial purposes. Whitley County became an independent county April 1, 1838.

Four townships, Cleveland, Smith, Richland and Thorncreek are older than the county, having been organized under the jurisdiction of the Huntington County Board of Commissioners: Cleveland in September 1836, Smith in September 1837, Richland and Thorncreek in November 1837. Troy and Union were organized in 1839, Columbia and Washington in 1840, Jefferson in 1845. Etna Township was originally the south one third of Washington Township, Noble County. On September 12, 1860 it became a legal part of this county. Etna and Troy were united into a single township January 1, 1951.

Cleveland, Richland and Troy Townships were originally six miles square. Prior to 1869, the voters had to go to the central school house of each township to vote. At the request of the voters in December 1868 a two mile strip off the south side of Troy was annexed to Richland.

The map also locates the city, towns and villages in the county, the former Indian reservations, railroads and early schools.

The dedication under the map reads as follows: "This historical composite is dedicated to the residents of Whitley County. It was made possible through the combined effort of the Alpha Iota Chapter of Kappa Kappa Kappa, The Whitley County Art Guild, and Miss Bernice Carver of the Whitley County Historical Society."

The protective case made by Harlan Boggs and his son, Jim, of Parkview Cabinetry of Collamer, Indiana was the contribution of the Whitley County Historical Society.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

LITTLE TURTLE

Artist: Mrs. Paul (Wini) Morsches, Jr.

Little Turtle, or Me-she-kin-no-quah, was born in 1752 at the Turtle Village on the north bank of the Eel River about five miles east of Columbia City. His father, Aquenakque, signed the treaty made by the Miami and other Indian tribes with the English at Lancaster, Pennsylvania in 1748. Some authorities say his mother was a Mohican squaw, others say she was a Miami.

Little Turtle was a warrior, later a man of peace, a traveler, orator, and also a prohibitionist. He defeated four white armies. The first of these was La Balme's in Whitley County during November of 1780. Then, in 1790, he met and defeated Col. Hardin at Heller's Corner on the Allen-Whitley County line and General Josiah Harmer in the battle of Harmer's Ford where the city of Fort Wayne is now. Finally, he defeated General Arthur St. Clair at what is now Fort Recovery, Ohio, in 1791.

He also led attacks against Wayne's forces as they advanced northward from Cincinnati, Ohio. But after observing the thoroughness with which Wayne conducted his campaign, Little Turtle advised the Indians to make peace with the Great White Father in Philadelphia. As a result, some Indians accused Little Turtle of cowardice and selected Blue Jacket for their commander in the Battle of Fallen Timbers in August 1794. Their defeat here led to the Treaty of Greenville in August of 1795. Little Turtle was the last chief to sign that treaty. Upon signing, he said that, just as he was last to sign, he would be the last to break the treaty.

At the suggestion of General Wayne, Little Turtle visited President Washington in Philadelphia on the behalf of his people. Washington presented him with a sword, the highest military honor that he could bestow, and a medal of peace which the Indian chief thereafter wore suspended from his neck. Washington also arranged with the artist Gilbert Stewart to paint a picture of the Eel River Chief. This painting was destroyed when the British burned the Capitol in 1814.

Later, during the term of President John Adams, Little Turtle again made a trip to Philadelphia. This time he went to ask Adams to stop the sale of whiskey to the Indians. He said that whiskey had killed more Indians than all the wars and diseases together. This was not the last time that he was to act as a spokesman for his people. In 1801 he was off to the new Capitol, Washington, D.C., to see President Thomas Jefferson. This trip, too, was to get protection for his people from the liquor traffic. On the way he attended a meeting of Quakers in Baltimore to seek help in teaching agriculture to his people. The Quakers sent a committee with Little Turtle to add their influence to his request in Washington. Finally, in part no doubt because of Little Turtle's efforts, a law was passed in January of 1802 giving the President power to suppress the sale of liquor to the Indians.

Little Turtle's efforts to teach his people agriculture also bore fruit. Congress appropriated $15,000 to help introduce agriculture among the Indians. The site of a Quaker school for Indians is marked on Road 24 in Wabash County between Andrews and La Gro.

The government gave Little Turtle an annuity and built a brick house for him in Union Township for the aid that he gave to General William Henry Harrison in negotiations with the Indians after 1800. He lived a peaceful existence in this house until July, 1812. He died of the gout in Fort Wayne at the home of his adopted son, Captain William Wells, who was also a son-in-law by reason of Wells' marriage to Sweet Breeze, Little Turtle's daughter. His grave site is at 647 Lawton Place, Fort Wayne, Indiana.

Mrs. Morsches has painted some of the symbols of the Miami Indian calendar in the background of her picture. This is quite appropriate since Little Turtle was one of the greatest of his people -- a "man for all seasons."

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

PIONEER TRAILS

Artist: Mrs. John (Margo) Langohr

When the first settlers came to Whitley County in 1833 it was a wilderness inhabitated by about 150 Indians. The only roads were the well beaten Indian hunting trails. The first pioneers came with their few possessions on foot or horseback. Some had a pack horse or maybe a slow-moving ox. Others came to Huntington on the Wabash-Erie Canal, then made their way over land to their acres in the forest. Often they had to hack out a path for themselves marked only by blazed trees.

Congress realized the importance of roads for people to reach the public lands of the West. They set aside five percent of the net proceeds of all the land sold in Indiana for road building. Out of every one hundred dollars of this money, three dollars was placed at the disposal of the General Assembly, and was always known as the "three percent fund." The state agent for this fund received it from the federal government and paid it out, according to the appropriations made by the General Assembly, to the county agents. Roads built with money from this fund were called state roads. The money, however, was sufficient to do little more than clear them of trees.

The first state road across Whitley County was surveyed and located in 1833. It followed the Indian trail from Fort Wayne in Allen County to Goshen in Elkhart County. This road passed through the present site of Churubusco in Whitley County. The road is still in use. It is known today as U.S. 33.

Another early road was the Yellow River Road which crossed Eel River in the eastern part of the county. The next road of importance was located and cut by the settlers from Huntington to Goshen. Goshen was important to the early settlers because it was a source of grain until they could clear land and raise grain for themselves.

Although state roads were important for just such reasons, the pioneers needed a network of short roads to link together their homes and businesses. This need led to the construction of "county roads." If a number of settlers wanted a county road, they would sign a petition and give it to the County Commissioners. The Commissioners then would appoint three "viewers" to investigate the need for the road. If the need was warranted, the Commissioners would order the Supervisor of the Road District to open the road.

These county roads were largely built by the settlers they served. Each man in the district had to work on the roads at least six days of each year. In the Summer or Fall the supervisor would call at each cabin and notify the settler where and when he should report with his axe or mattock to help make or mend a road. No pay was received for the twelve hours of labor each day, there was only a mark in the supervisors record book to show that the work was performed.

The early roads were seldom straight. If a large tree or rock was in the way, the road would detour around it. Most of the year the roads were thick with either mud or with dust. Even so crude as they were, these roads served a valuable purpose and laid a plan for the excellent network of roads that connects all parts of our county today to provide access to the rest of the state and the nation as well.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

WILDLIFE

Artist: Gary Martin

The first white men in Indiana were the French Jesuites who came to convert the Indians to Christianity. Following the Jesuites were the French, and later, the English fur traders. At that time, the fur of the beaver was in great demand in Europe for robes, hats, and coats.

Sieur de La Salle, a French nobleman, secured from King Louis XIV the exclusive right to the fur trade in the area of the Great Lakes including the upper Mississippi and the Ohio valleys. If La Salle was not the first of these fur traders and explorers, he became the best known. In 1679, La Salle sailed down Lake Michigan to the mouth of the Saint Joseph. He and his men ascended this river to the point where South Bend is today. They made a portage to the Kankakee, and descended to the Illinois River. Some members of the party explored every river and stream that would carry a canoe as far east as the Maumee. In 1680, La Salle gave personal direction to the building of the fort at the confluence of the Saint Mary's and Saint Joseph's rivers which became, eventually, Fort Wayne.

The earliest commander of the fort was Sieur Corthemanche. In his diary for 1681, he speaks of the superior otter skins purchased from the Indians living north and westward about thirty miles from the post. He also remarks about the hospitality with which the Indians received his men. This is clear evidence that white men visited Whitley County as early as 1681.

Artist Martin has represented a valuable natural resource, the wildlife of our area. The animals of the forest and streams were an important source of food for the frontier family. Animal skins were used for clothing, blankets, and coverings for doors and walls to protect against the cold and wind. Needles and awls were made from animal bones. Moreover, pelts not needed for local consumption could be sold or bartered for glass, salt, lead for bullets, axes, quinine, and many more useful items available only from settled areas. Indeed, even taxes were sometimes paid with wolf bounties.

Here are some things for you to do: find in the picture the beaver that is busy cutting down a tree, a skunk (polecat), rabbit, turtle, bear, raccoon, owl, bison, fox, and squirrel. What other animals do you see in the picture? Are any wild animals a natural resource of Whitley County today?

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

HOMESTEADING 1838 - 1840

Artist: Mrs. Elmer (Helen) Heinley

This picture depicts the homestead in the woods. An area has been cleared of trees and a cabin built. The husband is tilling the soil between the stumps with the aid of his patient ox. A flock of chickens are hunting bugs in the dooryard. The wife is tending her vegetable garden. In addition to the usual potatoes, beans, peas, onions, and cabbage, every garden had two or three rows of tobacco to furnish the woman a smoke and the men-folk a chaw.

Corn was an important crop. Cornbread cooked in many different ways was the staple food. It was baked in a large skillet with a lid. This skillet had legs and was called a "spider." Johnny cakes were baked on a board tilted toward the fire in the fireplace. If there was no board, the handle was taken out of the hoe and the metal covered with corn dough and cooked. This was the famous hoecake. Practically all bread was made of corn meal. Wheat was not raised at first because the land was so rich the stalks grew so tall that they could not support the heads of grain.

The adjoining woods furnished wild plants for greens, herbs for seasoning and medicine, vines for rope. Nuts and meal made from acorns were used for food. Wild fruit and berries were made into a sauce or dried for winter food. Maple syrup and wild honey from a bee tree were sources of sweets. Hominy and some kind of meat were also very important. Venison and bear meat were common, also turkey and squirrel. Later chickens and hogs became plentiful.

The forest furnished materials for the cabin, its furniture, tools such as shovels, pitchforks, mauls, brooms, even dishes -- plates, bowls, spoons, etc. The Whitley County Historical Museum has some of these early hand made tools on display. The first pioneers could not have survived long but for the abundance of the gifts of the forest.

An office for the sale of public land was opened in the old fort in Fort Wayne on October 22, 1823. The price of land was fixed by Congress in 1800 at two dollars an acre. Later the price was reduced to $1.25 an acre. Purchasers could pay in installments over a four year period. Six percent interest was charged if the payments were not made on time. The lands were offered in whole (640 acres), half, or quarter section lots. Smaller lots were sold if the buyer would pay the extra cost of surveying. Many early farms of 40 to 60 acres supported a family. At times, however, they existed on the edge of famine.

Any frontier settlement draws its people from older and more populous communities. New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and Ohio contributed many men and women who came to build their log cabins, hew down the forest, till the soil, and drain the swamps of our county.

It is generally agreed that the first white settler in the county was Andrew Mack, a squatter and Indian trader, who settled in section 4, Smith Township prior to the year 1827. On September 8, 1833, the 40 acres in the SW4SW4 of section 36, Smith Township, was entered by George Slagel. He purchased the adjoining 40 acres, SE4SW4, section 36, on September 11, 1833. Jesse Long entered the S2SE4, 80 acres and the SW4SE4, section 36, 40 acres, on September 10, 1833. Long also entered 120 more acres in section 36, S2SE4 and SW4SE4, section 36, the same day. He added to his land holding an additional 120 acres on June 10, 1834, and 40 acres on October 19, 1834. All of this was in section 36. The third man to locate here was Absalam Hire who entered the SW4SE4, 40 acres, section 35, on September 24, 1833. The Fort Wayne land office was busy selling land in Smith Township on June 10, 1834, when at least seven men entered land. They were: John Shupert, Samuel Smith, Aaron Bixby, Christian Coner, Jesse Long, Samuel Nickey, and John Shade.

The next point about which the settlers began to locate was Springfield in Cleveland Township. Springfield is now called South Whitley. Noah Kimsey purchased land in section 13 on March 24, 1834; Moses

Pierce Champlin in section 7 on December 6, 1834; and James Perkins in section 3 on May 6, 1835. In June of the same year Samuel Obenchain, Benjamin Cleveland, Palmer Cleveland, Jesse Cleveland, and Henry Swinehart all entered land in sections 11 and 12 of Cleveland Township.

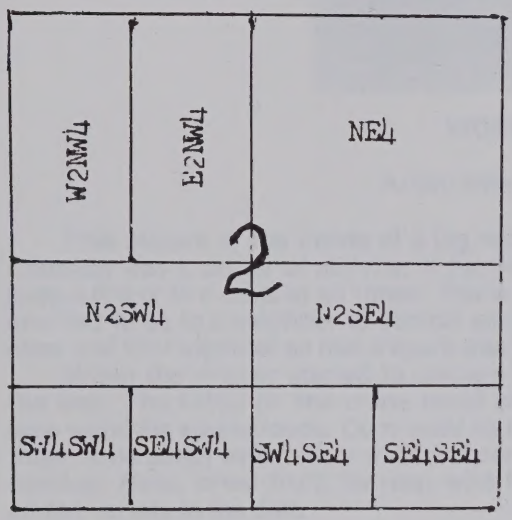
The pioneers who chose to establish their homes in the townships of this county were brave and resourceful people. They endured many hardships to lay the foundations for our local government, churches, schools, network of roads and other institutions of civilization that make Whitley County a splendid place in which to live today.

The legal land descriptions above may seem somewhat confusing. It is really very simple as the following example indicates.

W2NW4 - West half Northwest quarter, section 2.
E2NW4 - East half Northwest quarter, section 2
NE4 - Northeast quarter, section 2
N2SE4 - North half Southeast quarter, section 2
SW4SW4 - Southwest quarter Southwest quarter, section 2.
SW4SE4 - Southwest quarter Southeast quarter, section 2
SE4SE4 - Southeast quarter Southeast quarter, section 2

A standard section contained 640 acres.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian



WOMEN'S EARLY CABIN LIFE

Artist: Mrs. Edgar (Mary Louise) Strouse, Jr.

This picture of the inside of a log cabin is symbolic of the important role of the pioneer woman. The fireplace was a center of activity. It furnished light as well as heat in the cabin. Great effort was made to keep a fire or live coals at all times. There were no matches to light a new flame. If the fire went out, someone had to go to a neighbor to borrow some hot coals. If there was no neighbor, it was necessary to strike steel and flint together so that a spark was thrown down on a bit of tow or shreds of linen.

When the mother started to prepare a meal, everybody had to scatter back from the fireplace out of the way. The kettle on the crane could be swung out for greater ease in tending its contents. Meat and corn were the staple foods. Corn meal could be prepared in many ways; corn bread, johnny cake, hoe cake, mush to be eaten with milk or fried and served with sorghum molasses. Corn was also parched or made into hominy. Nuts, dried fruit, berries, wild honey, maple syrup, dried beans, squash, and sunflower seeds added variety to the diet.

The women tended the gardens, milked the cow, made butter and soap, gathered herbs for seasoning and for medicine. They made candles by dipping a wick in melted tallow or by moulding them in tin molds.

In the Fall, apples, cabbage, potatoes, and turnips were buried in a pit in the ground to be used during the winter months.

Wool was washed, carded, spun and woven into cloth. Yarn could be knitted into socks, mittens and scarves. Linsey-woolsey was cloth made with a warp of flax and a woof of wool. The spinning was exclusively a woman's task. Weaving was, however, sometimes performed by men. Dye for the garments was made by boiling bark from hickory, walnut, oak and sassafras trees. Golden rod, iris and polkberries were also used for dyes.

Water for cooking was carried from a spring or river. Clothes were generally taken right to the spring or river for washing.

The housewife tended the children, taught them their ABC's, and doctored and nursed the ill. In time of danger, they could also shoot a gun. Pioneer mothers and older daughters helped in the work of clearing the land by piling brush, chips and roots for burning. At harvest time, the men would cut the stocks of grain with a cradle. The women would follow along gathering armloads of straw and binding it into sheaves with strips of linden bark.

Quilting bees and apple peeling for making apple butter gave the women an opportunity to socialize. By cooperation and sharing of hard tasks, the pioneer men and women turned difficult and laborous work into a picnic. The women's work was never done. Their's was a busy and hard life. A visit to an old cemetery will tell you of the short lives of most of the pioneer women.

Things to do: Visit the Historical Society's museum to see grease lamps, candle molds, spinning wheels, a flax break, churns, a trundle bed and other pioneer tools and utensils.

The famous log cabin in which President Abraham Lincoln was born measures 12 by 17 feet. Using masking tape, measure this floor space on your class room floor. It is said that as many as nine people lived in cabins this size. Such cabins would generally have a loft, but, even so, living space was quite restricted.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

FIRST SCHOOL

Artist: Mrs. James (Carolyn) Beard

In the Summer of 1837, David Parrett taught the first school in the county in a log cabin that stood on the north bank of the Eel River near the State Street bridge in what is now South Whitley.This was a subscription school, that is, the parents paid Parrett for his services. The school term was three summer months with probably not more than ten pupils.

There was only one desk on which the pupils could write. It was a log slab fastened to the wall with wooden pegs, about three feet above the floor. Several crude benches made of split logs for the pupils and a chair and table for the Master completed the furniture. Some early student benches had their rounded side up. Once in a while a scholar would slide back too far, loose his balance, and land on his back on the puncheon floor.

Reading, writing, arithmetic and spelling made up the course of study.

On December 4, 1937, the school teachers of Whitley County placed and dedicated a marker, "Let There Be Light," in South Whitley to honor this first school and its teacher, David Parrett, for his effort to bring learning to the children of this early settlement.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

FIRST CHURCH

Artist: Miss Mary Dowell

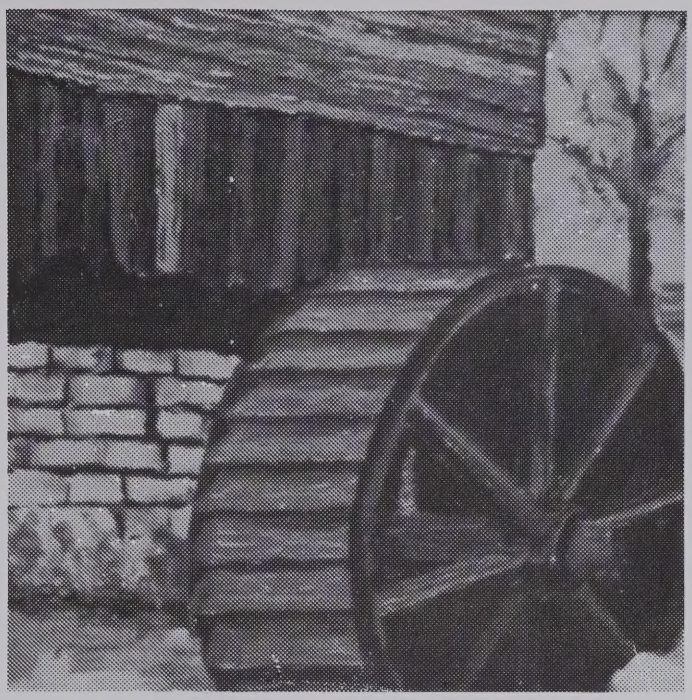
Someone has said that the first thing that the pioneers did was to build a church and a jail. This seems to have been close to the truth in our county. By the Spring of 1834, six families were living on the north bank of the Eel River in what is now Smith Township. One of these was Samuel Smith who entered a quarter section of land in section 34 of the township on June 10, 1834. Samuel Smith was a circuit rider for the Methodist Church. He organized the first religious congregation in the county when the people met in the home of Samuel Nickey in 1838. On July 30, 1839, Jacob and Catherine Van Houten deeded ¼ acre of land on the north-east corner of the intersection of road 150 North and Johnson Road to the Methodist Episcopal Church for a house of worship named Concord. A log building served as church here until replaced by a frame structure in 1851. In 1840, Samuel and Rebecca Smith gave land for a cemetery on the southeast corner.

Reverend Smith organized churches at Loraine, Blue River, Troy, Larwill and Columbia City in addition to this first, Concord, church. He represented the Indiana Methodist Conference. His territory was known as the Eel River Mission.

There is no church at Concord today. One can, however, still walk among the grave stones of Smith Township founders. A fallen slab of stones marks the grave of The Reverend Samuel Smith for whom the township was named.

Things to do: Look up the meaning of the word "Concord." It would be a commendable project for the young people of Smith Township to sponsor the repair of Samuel Smith's grave stone.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian



FIRST GRIST AND SAW MILL

Artist: Garry Fesler

Richard Baughan entered 160 acres in section 35, Thorncreek Township, on May 9, 1836, for $1.25 an acre. Later he added 80 more adjoining acres to his holdings. On this land he built a two-story log house with a lean-to and a log barn. The house stood east of the present bridge over Blue River on the north side of Cider Mill Road.

Richard Baughan was appointed the first sheriff of the county by Governor David Wallace in March of 1838. He served in this office until the election in the Fall of 1838 when Richard Collins was elected in his place. According to the late Mrs. Harry (Mary Barney) Early in an interview in 1965, Baughan had one prisoner. Since there was no jail until 1840, this prisoner was locked in a corn crib on his farm. The prisoner died of axe wounds before a trial could be held and was buried on the farm.

When the county was organized in 1838, it became a part of the Eighth Indiana Circuit Court. The first term of court was held in Richard Baughan's log house on April 9, 1839. The presiding judge was Charles W. Ewing, a Fort Wayne lawyer, appointed by the General Assembly. There were also two associate judges, Benjamin Martin and Jacob Van Houten, elected by the voters of the county. The second term of court was held in the same log cabin. The third term of court was held at the home of Zebulon Birch in Richland Township in the Spring of 1840.

The Goodspeed History of Whitley County (p. 223) tells us, "About the year 1841, Richard Baughan built a water wheel mill, with one run of buhrs for the grinding of corn, on the Blue River, in the southwest part of the township." (Section 3 is in the southeast part of the township.) There was also a saw-mill in connection with it, subsequently a bolter was put in so that wheat and buckwheat were ground, although it is said that the flour made was very inferior in quality. About the year 1855, the dam was carried away by a freshet, and there was no grinding done after that time, although the dam was partially repaired and some sawing was done afterward." The mill was "on the south side of the river and at the foot of the hill ---." (Kaler, Maring History of Whitley County p. 422)

Mrs. Early reported that the mill burned in the Spring of 1858. Lumber used to build the present house and barn in 1859 had been sawed the previous year and put in the kiln to dry over the winter. The kiln sheds and lumber were saved.

Mrs. Baughan and three children died between 1853 and 1856. They were buried under a large walnut tree. The Whitley County Historical Society erected a small marker for the Baughan Cemetery on the south side of the Cider Mill Road and east of the present house. His mill burned and many in his family now dead, it is easy to understand why Mr. Baughan then left the area.

Mrs. Early's father, the late Everett A. Barney, was born in the new house in April, 1860. Mrs. Early was also born there on November 28, 1890. Mrs. Early died March 22, 1983 at the age of 92. Five generations of Barneys have called this farm "home."

The Whitley County Historical Society erected a marker dedicated to the first county court, sheriff and mill on Sunday, November 28, 1965. That marker is east of the bridge on the Cider Mill Road.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

SUGAR CAMP

Artist: Mrs. Glen (Phyllis) Mattix

The notation of John Hendricks, surveyor of Troy Township in 1834 of an Indian sugar camp inspired the artist to paint this delightful picture of a maple sugar camp.

The honey bee and sap from maple trees was the source of sweeteners for the Indians and pioneer settlers. By cutting or boring into the outer, "sapwood", of the tree at the beginning of the warm spells in February or March, before the buds on the trees began to open, large quantities of water containing a considerable percentage of sugar could be drawn from the tree without harming it. In the early days, a sloping notch was cut in the south side of the tree with an axe. At the lower end of the notch, a spile was inserted to lead the dripping water into a wooden trough. Later an auger was used to tap the trees. Spiles were made from the stem of the paw-paw bush or from the hollow stems of the elder bush. The troughs had to be emptied twice a day. A barrel on a one horse sled was used to collect the water and to bring it to the camp. Big iron kettles which could hold fifty gallons each were hung from a pole by long S hooks or by pieces of chain and a fire would be built under them. When there was an abundant flow of water, the kettles were kept boiling day and night.

As the water boiled away and became thicker and sweeter, it was dipped from the first kettle into a second where the fire was not so hot. When the contents of this kettle had boiled into a thin syrup, it was transferred to a third kettle or taken to the farm house for the final reduction into a thick molasses at an even lower temperature. The thickness was tested by pouring it into a cup of cold water. If the hardened wax was brittle, the kettle was taken from the fire. If a granulated or lump sugar was desired, it was stirred vigorously with a wooden paddle while it cooled. If the sugar was to be in cake form, it was poured while hot into pans or dishes which had been greased with butter to cool. About 25 gallons of sap were required to make a half-gallon of syrup.

Phyllis has shown us the maple sap being collected in buckets and transported to the kettles for boiling. Don't you wish you could join the children in eating the maple candy they are making in the snow?

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

THE FIRST JAIL

Artist: Mrs. Leon (Sandy) Wysong

The first public building erected in the county was a jail. The settlers were not lawless people. The incarcerated were mostly drunken Indians or traveling outlaws. The jail stood on the southeast corner of the public square in the county seat (then called Columbia).

Artist Wysong was guided in painting the first jail by the description set forth in the county commissioners records on July 4, 1840:

> Eighteen feet long and sixteen feet wide of hewn timber squared to eight inches thick and twelve inches wide. The wall to be sunk three feet in the ground and built up even with the surface of the ground, with a single wall, then laid up with hewn timber seven inches thick, doubled crosswise, then continue the wall double, of the same size timber ten feet high, with a petition through the center of the same size timber. Door to be cut out and hung with a strong shutter of oak plank one inch thick doubled. The shutter made with a small window in the center, four inches deep and eight inches wide. The upper floor to be laid with hewn timber eight inches thick, to be laid upon the plaits. To be covered with a good joint shingle roof, the rafters to be spiked down with iron spikes. One window in the outside wall two feet square to be checked with axe bar iron, one inch and one quarter thick and four inches apart, well fastened to the wall. The outside door to be made of oak plank one inch thick, doubled and covered with sheet iron, sufficiently rivited together with iron rivits in rows four inches apart one way and two inches the other with large heads and with a good substantial lock, hung with good and sufficient hinges. (Vol. A. p. 84)

The jail was completed in the Spring of 1841 by William Blair, the contractor, at a cost of $490. He was allowed $8.00 for clearing the timber and brush from the site and for two rods beyond each way.

This jail served its purpose until March 1855 when an inmate set it on fire in an effort to gain his freedom.

The second jail and sheriff's residence was a two story brick, stone and wood structure on the site of the first court house and present City Hall. It was completed in November, 1855, at a cost of $5,224. This building was never satisfactory. Ventilation and security were so poor that prisoners were often held in Fort Wayne until wanted for trial.

The county bought the quarter block where the present jail is located on December 19, 1871, for twelve hundred dollars. Work on the new jail began on April 12, 1875. The keys of the new jail were handed to the commissioners on June 19, 1876, and they officially accepted the building on June 26, 1876. The contract price for this third jail still in use today was $34,486.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

THE FIRST COURT HOUSE

Artist: Mrs. Max (Marilyn) Kimble

A special session of Whitley County Commissioner's Court was held on June 26, 1841 in the house of David E. Long. Long's house was, if not the first, one of the first, in Columbia (now Columbia City). After the court was officially opened by public proclamation of the sheriff, they adjourned to the jail to transact their business. The county agent was ordered to sell to the lowest bidder the building of a court house. They specified in great detail how the building was to be built. It was to be a two-story structure, thirty-six feet by eighteen feet. The lower story was to be nine feet high, the upper story eight feet high above that. The siding was to be poplar planks. There were to be two doors and eleven windows -- "two 18 lite windows and one 24". The other windows were to have only batten shutters. The building was to be set on five large rocks. The stairway to the second floor was to be on the outside of the building on its north end. On the first floor was to be the court room while the second floor was to be divided into two rooms for the transaction of county business.

Richard Baughan, who had the first saw-mill in the county, received the contract to complete the building. It was completed according to these specifications in October of 1841 at the cost of $411.50. It stood where the Columbia City City Hall stands today. In 1845 the commissioners ordered glass for the rest of the windows.

The building was furnished with seats made of poplar plank, twelve inches wide, two inches thick, and ten feet long. Four seats were made with backs and eight without backs. There was also a table of "convenient size." Richard Collins received five dollars for making this furniture. Joseph W. Baker was paid three dollars for clearing and removing the timber from the ground.

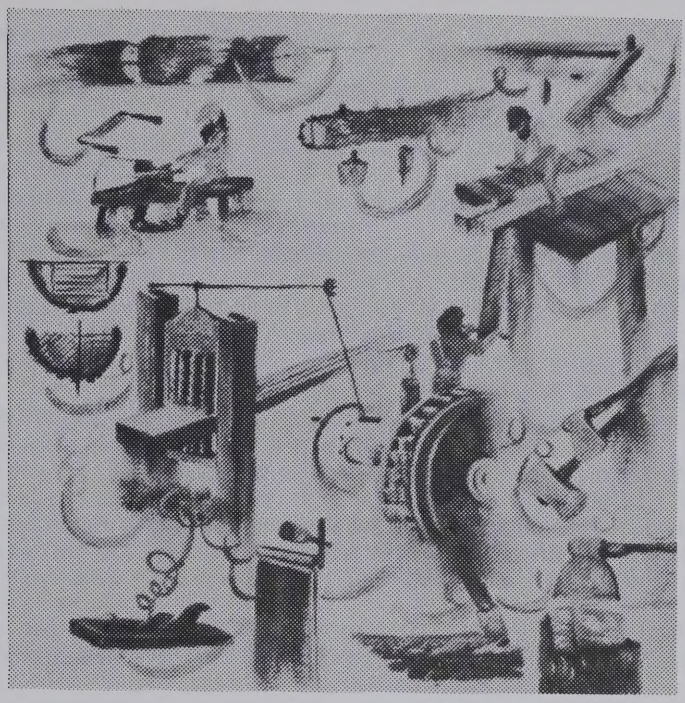
In December, 1853, the original court house, having served its term of usefulness to the county, was bid off by Sylvester Knapp for $35.25. This building now stands at 108 South Whitley Street in Columbia City where it serves as a dwelling.

Before painting this picture, artist Marilyn Kimble studied the commissioner's description and visited the present owner of the house, Mrs. Ruth Richard, so she could make it as authentic as possible.

The second court house was a two-story brick building with a cupola or steeple. The commissioners accepted this building on October 12, 1850. It was a beautiful building but they were not able to keep the cupola from leaking every time it rained. The commissioners decided that it would be cheaper to build a new court house than to keep trying to repair the leaking roof.

The brick structure was demolished and the present court house was built on the same site. The corner stone was laid September 20, 1888. The county officials moved into the new building in April of 1890. The program of dedication was June 14, 1890.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian



LUMBER AND CARPENTRY

Artist: Mrs. Louis (Catherine) Jones

Whitley County is in an area that has produced some of the finest timber in the world. Artist Catherine Jones has represented some of the tools that the early settlers used in working with this valuable natural resource. Pictured from left to right:

The Lead Log -- Notice that the logger has made a pointed end on the first of a string of logs to be snaked through the thick mat of leaves and underbrush. This made it easier for the logger and his horse or ox in pulling the logs from the forest.

Square Peg in a Round Hole -- To take the place of scarce and expensive nails, the carpenter drilled a hole through two boards or timbers and then pounded a very dry square peg into the hole. Moisture would cause the peg to swell assuring a tight joint. The peg was called a trenall or tree nail. Both spellings were pronounced "tree nail."

Shaving Horse and Drawknife -- The shaving horse was a special type of bench to which the carpenter could securely clamp a board. He sat on the end of the bench and operated the clamp by means of a foot peddle. From this sitting position, he could use a well balanced drawknife to shave or plane the surface of the board. The knife had a handle at each end at right angles to the blade. It was drawn toward the user in shaving a surface.

Wedges -- A wedge was a piece of hard material, wood or metal, tapered from a thick back to a thin edge that could be driven into a narrow opening to split wood. The split was started by driving an iron wedge into the wood with a maul near one end of the log. This separated the grain for a couple feet. This fissure was extended by driving in several wooden wedges called gluts. In this way firewood and fence rails, among other useful things, could be made.

Pit Saw -- Before there were sawmills, the work of sawing was done by a pit saw. The pit saw was a very long two-man saw designed to be used up and down instead of horizontally. Sometimes a man stood on a raised platform but the convenience of not lifting a log led to a pit with one man down below. Three men usually worked as a team. The sawyer, who guided the saw along a chalkline, stood on the timber above ground. His assistant, the pit man, worked below in a shower of sawdust. The saw sharpener kept his trade a secret, operating in a closed room. The filing of the saw teeth determined the smoothness of the cut and how free a board would be of saw marks. In a sawmill, he was one of the best paid employees.

Flat Sawed or Quarter Sawed -- There were two ways of sawing boards from a log -- plane sawed or quarter sawed. Plane or flat sawed boards were cut as slices from the length of a log. To quarter saw a log, it is first cut into quarters and then these quarters are sliced into individual boards. Quarter sawn boards show the grain of the wood nicely and it also reduces warping in the finished lumber.

Gang Saw -- The gang saw was a multibladed pit saw set in a groved frame or sash. The early pit saws were hand operated and fed. Later they were operated by water power. One wit said of an early waterpowered pit saw in Whitley County, "It was an up and down saw; up in the morning and down in the afternoon."

Axes -- One of the first tools to be devised by man was the ax. There are many different types of ax heads and handles. Each man knew well the curve of his handle and the balance of the ax head to fit his own individual needs. There are two kinds of American axes; the pole ax or flat ax with a flat head and the double bit ax with two cutting edges. Whether a man came from New England, Ohio, or Indiana could often be told just by examining carefully the shape of his ax.

Axes were used to fell trees, of course, but they were not limited to this use. What the woodsman ax

was to the cutter, the broadax was to the dresser of wood. With the broad, crescent-edge blade and the handle that curved out of the plane of the blade, a rough log could be squared and hewn to a smoothness dependent only upon the skill of the workman.

Plane -- The plane is a carpenter's tool for shaving a wood surface in order to make it smooth and level. It is a later development than the drawknife and is pushed away from the carpenter's body. The proof of an apprentice carpenter's skill was said to be when he could plane a huge shaving up over his head and down his back. It was the custom in the early days for him to print his name on this first long shaving with the word carpenter for all to see.

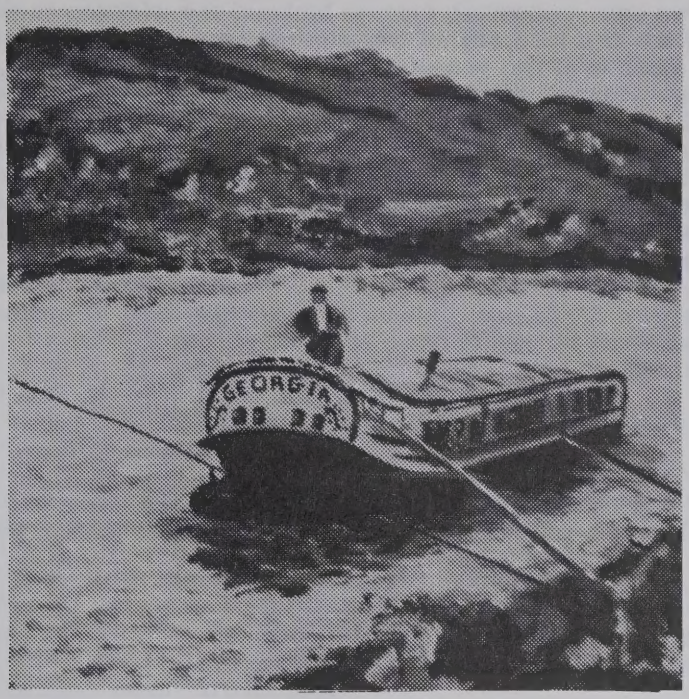
Splitting Shingles -- The froe or frow was used for splitting shingles or shakes. The froe is a long thin iron wedge with a handle on one end. To rive or split out a shingle, the froe was entered at one end of a bolt of wood that had been hewn to size. The split was run by prying upon the handle. The secret of good riving lay in knowledge of the qualities of the wood.

Adz -- The adz is an ax like tool used for trimming and smoothing wood. Its curved blade is at a right angle to the handle. There were almost as many different styles of adz heads and handles as there were users. Because the adz was used on timber that the man straddled, and the blade swept past between his legs, few went along without serious scars on both legs.

Maul -- The maul is a very heavy hammer or mallet. It was usually made of wood. Its use was for driving stakes and wedges. Splitting was an important branch of woodcraft in the days before sawmills. The simplest maul was made by cutting a six or eight inch second growth of hickory down to handle size for three or four feet leaving a cylinder of full size at the bottom for the maul head. A bit more sophisticated, the mallet maul had a long handle inserted in the side of the head and iron rims to keep the faces from shattering.

Things to do: When you go to the Whitley County Historical Museum, look for some of these hand tools. Your father or grandfather may have some of these tools. Ask him if you might take them to school.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian



THE WABASH-ERIE CANAL

Artist: Mrs. James (Joann) Espich

The people who came to Indiana from the East came by horseback, wagon, or the natural highways of the Great Lakes and the Ohio River. The land was rich and it produced a surplus of crops. But it was very hard to get that produce to the markets in the East or South. By the same token, it was difficult for the pioneers to secure nails and other hardware, dishes, drugs, and other supplies that had to come from more developed areas. Salt, for example, took two weeks to haul by ox team from Michigan City to Whitley County. It cost $12 per barrel, a kingly sum; as a consequence, a quicker and cheaper means of trade and communication with the centers of population in the East and South was needed.

It was proposed that a network of canals be constructed at state expense in Indiana. The earliest of these, the Wabash-Erie Canal, was to extend from Lake Erie along the Maumee and Wabash Rivers to the Ohio River.

Fort Wayne, 198 feet above Lake Erie, was the highest point in the natural flow of waterways in the Atlantic-Gulf of Mexico river system. It is for that reason that it has the nickname "Summit City." Its elevation made it the logical place to begin to build this man made river. Ground breaking for the canal took place in Fort Wayne on Washington's birthday, February 22, 1832.

On July 3, 1834, the waters of the Saint Joseph River joined the waters of the Little River at Huntington. The next day, July 4, 1834, the canal boat "Indiana" arrived at Huntington. As the Indiana neared port, the tooting of a clarinet and the notes of a fiddle attracted a crowd of Indians, back-woodsmen, and town men to the dock.

In the three years following the opening of the canal between Fort Wayne and Huntington, five new counties were organized: Whitley, Adams, Wells, Wabash and Howard Counties. By July 4, 1843, the canal was opened to Lafayette. In the meantime, Ohio had built the part of the canal that extended from Fort Wayne to Toledo on Lake Erie. In 1853 the 459 miles of canal from Toledo to Evansville were completed.

The main canal was usually between 40 and 50 feet wide and from 4 to 6 feet deep. The pick, shovel and wheelbarrow were the construction machinery. The local men were too busy farming to help build the canal. So labor was imported from New York and other eastern communities. Hundreds of German and Irish laboring men were induced to come dig the canal. Their wages were 10 to 13 dollars a month. The Irishmen had quick tempers and many fights developed between the members of different clans.

Cholera, fever, ague, dysentery and swarms of mosquitoes made life almost unbearable and took a great toll of the Irish workmen. It has been said that one Irishman died for every six feet of canal built. Whiskey was the usual preventative medicine or remedy for all these maladies. A "jigger boss" carried a bucket of "redeye" and a tin cup along the line of workers. The boss determined the size and frequency of the dosage appropriate for each man. In later years it was remarked to a former jigger boss that the workmen must have been drunk all the time. He replied, "You would not expect them to work on the canal if they were sober, would you?"

Many of these Irish canal workers settled in the communities along the canal. Their descendents live today in Fort Wayne, Roanoke, Huntington, Lagro and Wabash.

There were a number of serious obstacles in the way of the canal's construction. The removal of trees was a serious problem in itself. Locks were also a problem. The locks, made of wood in areas where building stone was scarce, made it possible for the canal to go up hill where necessary. In addition, an inadequate supply of water sometimes required that long "feeder" canals be constructed. Finally, when the canal met a river in its way, it was often necessary to build an aqueduct to carry the canal up and over the river.

The canal boats were small -- about sixty to seventy feet long and fifteen feet wide. They tried to ac-

comodate as many people as possible; one hundred or more passengers were not unusual. The deck was full of baggage and freight. The cabin provided quarters for the crew and the kitchen. The main cabin served as a dining room, a place for writing, talking, and playing games of chess or cards during the day. Berths were three high along the wall where they were attached to iron hooks by ropes.

The canal boats were pulled by horses or mules and a three inch rope 150 to 250 feet long. The horses walked or trotted along the edge of the canal. The narrow road that they used was called the tow-path. The number of horses or mules varied from two to six depending on the size of the boat or the urgency of speed. The better canal boats were pulled by three horses which were changed every ten or twelve miles. Few boats could cover more than one hundred miles a day. The driver rode the left rear horse or mule. Sometimes relay horses were carried on the freight boats, but usually the horses were stationed at convenient posts about ten miles apart.

As a "packet," a passenger boat, approached a landing, one of the crew would sound a tin horn. Villagers would flock to the landing to see the passengers and to pick up news and rumors from neighboring or distant communities. A typical packet crew was composed of the captain, the steward, who tended bar, a pantry man, a cook, a chambermaid, two cabin boys and two steersmen.

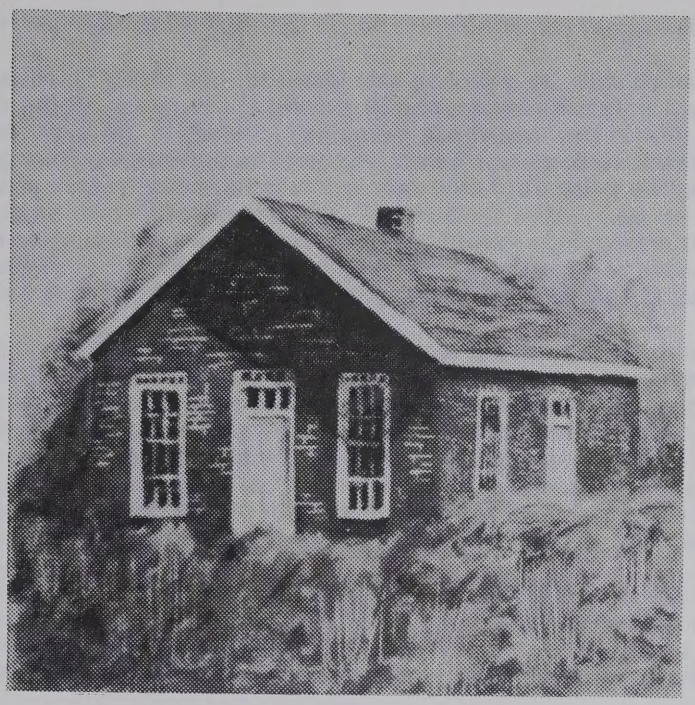
In winter the canals were closed. Sometimes the water was drained, but more often it was permitted to freeze and thus form a smooth highway for sleighs.

There was no good system for collecting tolls from those who used the waterway. Floods made repair and upkeep costly. When railroads were built, the canal could not compete with the more rapid transportation. This was the death blow for the Wabash-Erie Canal. In 1881, the canal right-of-way was bought, the water drained, and the channel filled to provide a railroad roadbed.

One can still see evidence of the canal along its route. In Huntington County, at the southwest corner of the intersection of US 24 and Ind. 37, is a depression in the land that some say was a former canal turnaround. This is across the road from Chief Richardville's house. In Lagro, Indiana, on US 24, one can still see stones of the Jim Kerr Lock and the graves of many of the Irish men who came to build the canal. Here also is the oldest Catholic Church in northern Indiana.

Things to do: Go see Richardville's house and, across the road, the Indian Treaty Grounds at the Forks of the Wabash. Go to Lagro to see the Kerr Lock and the Catholic Church.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian



THE FIRST BRICK SCHOOL

Artist: Mrs. Ronald (Pat) Reed

Very meager records or, often, no records at all were kept of schools in Indiana before 1852. As early as March 6, 1844, the Whitley County Commissioners ordered County Agent Henry Swihart to buy lot number three, block twenty-five in the town of Columbia on condition that the school trustees would erect upon this "lot a frame building one story high and sufficiently large for convenient school house within the term of six months." For some unrecorded reason the lot was not purchased at this time. Two years later on March 8, 1846, the commissioners again instructed the county agent, now James S. Collins, to buy the lot on consideration that the trustees erect a good school house within a year. The first brick school house in the county was erected on this lot in 1847. This was also the first building erected in Columbia City for school purposes. The site of this school was on the south side of the two hundred block of West Ellsworth Street where the Catholic Church now has a parking lot.

In a publication entitled "Report of the Public Schools of Columbia City, Indiana for the school year 1895-96 and 1896-97," on an appendix numbered page 53, we are told that Dr. Martin Ireland "taught the first term of school there in the winter of 1846 and 1847. The length of term was three months and the tuition fee was two dollars for each pupil. Mrs. Franklin H. Foust also taught a term of school in the summer following." This report says that school was continuously held in the little brick school until November, 1848. The contractor who built the school was Martin Schrader and the brick was made by Shepley whose brick yard was located at 313 North Main Street.

Later the building was made into a dwelling. According to an item in the Columbia City Post of January 22, 1902, Abe Green was tearing down this brick structure which was one story high and twenty-four by thirty-six feet -- in its day, the article continues, the building was "the pride of the town." This same article relates the following Christmas story:

> Joe Brown was one of the first teachers in this building. In those days school was not dismissed on Christmas. One Christmas day the teacher returned at noon to find the door locked and a number of big boys, 16 and 18 years old, inside, declaring it was Christmas and they should have an apple treat. After gaining admittance by promising the treat Brown told the boys he was "boss" and there would be no treats. Several of the boys overpowered him and started toward the river with him. When he realized their intent was to duck him, he capitulated and all the school was treated to apples.

A state referendum in 1848 gave a bare majority in favor of a tax supported public school system. Whitley County voted in favor of this measure. A bill to increase and extend the benefits of common schools received the signature of Governor Paris O. Dunning on January 17, 1848. This gave each county the privilege of local option. Again Whitley County favored public support of education.

The school law of 1852 placed the management of schools with a board of township trustees. This was the era of the "little red school house" of literature. In fact many school buildings were of log or frame because they were cheaper to build. Each township was divided into districts. These school houses were usually three or four miles distant from each other. Here one teacher taught all pupils in the eight grades. The daily teacher schedule was to arrive early, build a fire in the large wood burning stove, sweep out the building, teach all the pupils in all the classes for the school day and play at recess and noon with the pupils. Then, after school, all the papers would be graded and lessons for the next day would be prepared.

Many of the teachers arrived at the school before sunrise and closed the school house after dark during the winter months. Discipline was confirmed with the use of paddle, leather strap or hickory gad. The teacher's success was not measured by how much the pupils learned but by "how he kept school". A raised hand with one or two fingers was a request to go to the outhouse. The teacher's reply was a shake

or nod of the head. There was no artificial lighting; so, on rainy or cloudy days reading and writing progress was slow.

The school day began at 8:15 a.m. and dismissal was at 3:45 p.m. with an hour out for lunch, usually 11:30 to 12:30. The lower grades were usually given a 15 minute recess during the forenoon and afternoon periods. Reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic, grammar, geography and history were the usual subjects taught. Many times two grades were combined to make a class if the enrollment was small.

A large wood stove was usually in the center of the room with the smaller desks, either single or double, near the front and the larger desks toward the rear. The teacher's desk was on a raised platform in the front. Many schools had an organ in one front corner and a library cupboard in the opposite. Water, carried from a farm house in a twelve gallon pail with a long handled dipper and several tin cups, supplied the drinking water. All carried their lunch. A half gallon molasses pail or a lard bucket were frequently used as lunch pails.

All pupils walked to and from school unless their parents provided them with horse drawn transportation. The same was true for the teacher unless the teacher boarded with a local resident near the school.

Seldom did the teacher teach more than two or three consecutive terms in one school. The common practice among the trustees was to change the teachers from one school to another. Before 1873, the county school examiner, appointed by the Board of County Commissioners, examined prospective teachers in late summer and issued their licenses to teach. The school examiner and later the County School Superintendent of Schools, established in 1872, held and conducted teachers' institutes to prepare and examine teachers before issuing licenses. Later graded text books were adopted by the township trustee upon the advice of the County Superintendent.

Days of special importance were the visit of the County Superintendent, the evening Literary Society meetings, rival school "spelling down" contest, the "Big Dinner" on the last day of school and the eighth grade commencement program. If a high school was not available or too far distant, some pupils would take the eighth grade over to improve their fundamental learning and assist the teacher in instruction of the lower grades.

School consolidation followed the district school system. In 1920 there were eight township high schools in operation in Whitley County. Each had an adjoining elementary school.

There are still a few red brick school houses standing in Whitley County. Some have been converted into homes garages, storage sheds. Others are fast crumbling back to the earth from which they were made.

Things to do: Talk to someone who taught or attended a one room school. Have them describe their school. Ask them if they felt prepared to go to high school. Find out what kind of games they played at recess. On what do you think the quality of the school would depend?

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

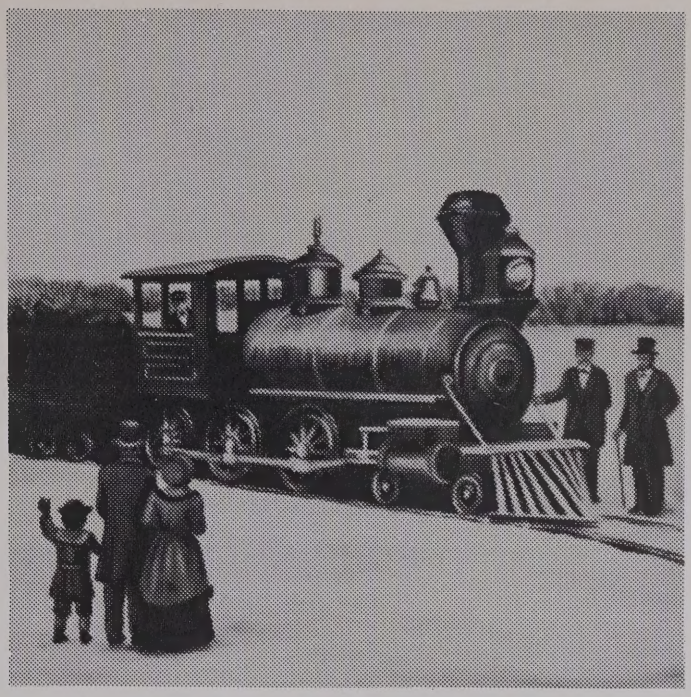
FIRST FRAME HOUSE

Artist: Mrs. John (Ileen) Andrews

Artist Andrews painted this picture of the first frame house in Columbia City from a photograph now in the Whitley County Historical Society Museum. It had been donated by James Swayze and was one of the earliest articles placed in the "relic room" of the Whitley County Court House. Mr. Swayze had lived in this house. A note on the back of the picture states that the house was built in 1847. It stood on the northwest corner of the intersection of East Market and South Whitley Streets. The house faced Whitley Street.

The deed records show that Dr. William M. Swayze purchased the lot from Lafayette Lamson on May 11, 1847 for $200. Lamson had paid $30 for the lot when he purchased it in June, 1846. The increase in value indicates an improvement, no doubt the house.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian



FIRST RAILROAD

Artist: Mrs. Paul (Carolyn) Burkett

The Fort Wayne and Chicago Railway Company was organized in Fort Wayne and chartered in 1852. The work was completed to Columbia City on the 22nd day of January, 1856. The following morning the first engine, the "Mad Anthony", arrived in Columbia City. A number of Fort Wayne citizens came on an open freight car with boards for seats. The train stopped about 165 feet east of Whitley Street. A delegation of Columbia City people met the train and escorted the visitors uptown. The return trip was made about noon.

On January 30, 1856, a time table was posted in Fort Wayne. It read: "On and after February 1st, a passenger train will leave this city daily at 7:30 a.m., arrive at Columbia 9:00 a.m., leave Columbia at 5:00 p.m., and reach this city at 6:30 p.m. The fare was eighty cents each way. An hour and a half to travel between Fort Wayne and Columbia City would be about 13 miles per hour; fast when compared to 3 miles per hour by canal boat. By Christmas, 1856, there was rail service to Plymouth and to Chicago in the Spring of 1857.

The Fort Wayne and Chicago Railway became a part of the great Pennsylvania Railroad system. Today, 1984, it is a part of Conrail.

A second railroad, the Detroit, Eel River and Illinois Railroad was organized in 1869. James S. Collins of Columbia City was President of the company. The Kahler History of Whitley County tells us that the road was completed from Butler, Indiana to South Whitley in June 1871. A free excursion from Columbia City to South Whitley took place July 25, 1871. Over five hundred people made the trip in an hour and a quarter. A large crowd met the train at South Whitley and escorted the visitors to a grove where they were entertained with a free dinner and enthusiastic speeches. The road was finished to Logansport before the end of 1871. Passenger service was established from Logansport to Butler in the forenoon and back in the afternoon.

The line was leased to the Wabash Railroad Company in January, 1881. For nineteen years the Wabash operated one of the finest of passenger services of its day. A group of jealous men in Logansport forced the sale of the line to the Vandalia Railroad, claiming it ran parallel to and competed with an older railroad. Deterioration of service and competition by trucks put this line out of business. Today the rails and roadbed have almost disappeared.

The Nickel Plate Railway was built across Whitley County in 1881. It runs east and west through the county. The villages of Dunfee, Raber, Peabody and the town of South Whitley are on this line and it has been important to farmers for shipping grain to market.

Bernice Carver
Whitley County Historian

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